



THE ISLAMIC BULLETIN

Issue 5

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Published by the
Islamic Community of
Northern California
A Non-Profit Corporation
P.O. Box 410186
San Francisco, CA 94141-0186
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Website: <http://www.islamicbulletin.org>

THE MIRACLES OF THE QURAN

Humanity has received the Divine guidance only through two channels: firstly the word of God, secondly the Prophets who were chosen By God to communicate His will to human-beings. These two things have always been going together and attempts to know the will of God by neglecting either of these two have always been misleading.

The Christians, in total disregard to the Book of God, attached all importance to Jesus Christ (AS) and thus not only elevated him to Divinity, but also lost the very essence of Tawheed (monotheism) contained in the Bible.

As a matter of fact the main scriptures revealed before the Quran i.e., the Old Testament and the Gospel, came into book-form long after the days of the Prophets. This was because the followers of Moses and Jesus made no considerable efforts to preserve these Revelations during the life of their Prophets. Rather they were written long after their death.

On the contrary, the last revealed Book, the Quran, is in its original form. God Himself guaranteed its preservation and that is why the whole of the Quran was written during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Moreover, there were tens of thousands of the companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) who memorized the whole Quran and the Prophet (pbuh) used to recite it to the angel Gabriel once a year and twice when he was about to die.

The Quran was so meticulously preserved because it was to be the Book of guidance for humanity for all times to come. That is why it does not address the Arabs alone in whose language it was revealed. It speaks to man as a human being. The practicability of the Quranic teachings is established by the examples of Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) and the good Muslims throughout the ages.

The distinctive approach of the Quran is that its instructions are aimed at the general welfare of man and are based on the possibilities within his reach. That is why the Quran is the central sacred reality of Islam. Its importance is so great that the sound of the Quran is the first and last sound that a Muslim hears in this life.

Beginning with this issue, we will explain in greater detail the wisdom and miracles of The Holy Quran, God-willing.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Dear Editor:

I am a very devout Christian who was recently introduced to Islam. I enjoy reading The Islamic Bulletin very much and look forward to each issue.

There is just one question, however, that has been bothering me from your last issue. It was stated that it was the Prophet Ismael who was going to be sacrificed by his father, Prophet Abraham. I have been taught in Christianity that it was Prophet Isaac.

I never knew until reading the Islamic Bulletin, that Islam believes that it was the Prophet

Ismael. Now I am confused. I don't know which one is right. Please clarify it for me.

Your Christian Brother,
Carlos Rodriguez, San Francisco

Response:

First of all, I would like to thank you for writing and in response to your statement, please refer to the following sections from the Bible: "After these things God tested Abraham, and said to him, 'Abraham! And he said, 'Here am I.' God then said, 'Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as burnt offering upon one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.'" (Genesis 22:1-2).

There is a glaring contradiction in this statement. It says that God asked Abraham to sacrifice his only son Isaac for Him and also emphasizes that he is the only son. Other statements of the Bible clearly show that Isaac was not the only son, "Now Sarai, Abraham's wife, bore him no children. She had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar; and Sarai said to Abraham, 'Behold now the Lord has prevented me from bearing children; go into my maid; it may be that I shall obtain children by her.' And Abraham hearkened to the voice of Sarai. So, after Abraham had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abraham's wife took Hagar the Egyptian, her maid, and gave her to Abraham, her husband, as a wife. And he went in Hagar, and she conceived.'" (Genesis 16:1-4). And in the same chapter we find, "And the angel of the Lord said to her, 'Behold, you are with child, and shall bear a son; you shall call his name Ishmael!'" (Genesis 16:1-4) And in the same chapter we read, 'And Hagar bore Abraham a son; and Abraham called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. Abraham was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abraham.'" (Genesis 16:15-16).

Thereafter when Abraham was a hundred years old he was given the good news of the birth of his second son, Ishaque from Sarai, "And God said to Abraham, 'As for Sarai, your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her... and you shall call his name Isaac..."

Then Abraham took Ishmael his son and all the slaves born in his house or bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very day as God had said to him.

Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael, his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin." (Genesis 17: 15-25).

Another section of the Bible mentions the time of birth of Isaac in these words, 'Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.' (Genesis 21-5).

A cursory glance at the above statements of the Bible will show that Ishmael was the only son of the Prophet Ibrahim right up to the age of fourteen. If Prophet Ibrahim was commanded to sacrifice his only son, it could be only Ishmael and not Ishaque because the latter was not his only son but second son.

The statements in the Qur'an discussed above explicitly point out that The Almighty asked Prophet Ibrahim to sacrifice his son Ishmael when he was his only son and also establish first; that when Ibrahim had no children, he prayed to The Almighty for a virtuous child (Qur'an 37:100) and was given the good news of the birth of a gentle and patient boy (Qur'an 37:101).

And second; when that child was able to run and play, then Prophet Ibrahim was asked to offer him in sacrifice (Qur'an 37:102). Third; it leaves no doubt that the good news was the birth of his first child and sacrifice was also of the first child who was the only child of Prophet Ibrahim. That child was Ishmael beyond any shadow of doubt.

Fourth; the words used by the Qur'an when giving the good news of the birth of his two sons, Ishmael and Ishaque (Isaac), also seem to point out the different qualities of the two boys. For Ishmael it uses the words "gentle and patient boy" (Qur'an 37:101) and for Ishaque "boy possessing wisdom and knowledge" (Qur'an 15:53). Fifth; it seems more rational and reasonable to deduce from the language used in the Qur'an regarding the good news of the birth of Ishaque that he could not be the boy who was demanded in sacrifice.

When the Qur'an gives the good news of the birth, it also gives the good news of Ibrahim's grandson, Yakub (Jacob), from Ishaque (Isaac) (Qur'an 11:71). It seems very illogical that the prophet Ibrahim (A.S.) is given good news of the birth of a son and also a grandson from him and, at the same time, he is asked to sacrifice the same son.

This totally rules out the birth of a grandson from the same son. Besides, when the news of the birth of Ishaque (A.S.) was given, Ibrahim (Abraham) (A. S.) was told that he would be a prophet and one of the righteous (Quran 37:112) and also that his grandson would be of the righteous and would receive revelation for human guidance. (Qur'an 21:72-73).

This clearly points out that the Command of sacrifice was not for Ishaque (A.S.) but for the other son who was patient and was born many years before him. I hope this will answer your question.

NEED TO CONTACT US?

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ISLAM IN USSR - DEMOCRACY AND IDEOLOGY

London: Re-evaluation of the stereotypes concerning anti-religious propaganda is under way in Soviet academic circles. The long history of Muslim civilization, especially in Central Asia, speaks for itself. Atheism has failed. Presently, any attack on religion is not encouraged nor can it hope to succeed. Rather, in a subtle and sophisticated manner, government officials are taking care of the needs of the religious communities as long as there is no proliferation of tendencies detrimental to the present government. Mr. K. Moldobaev, the Vice Chairman of the USSR Council for Religious Affairs, has eloquently enumerated the facilities the Muslims have been given lately (see Pravda Vostoka, January 8, 91). Apart from mentioning the increase in the mosques, which according to him now stands at 1500, and preparation for the translation of the Holy Qur'an into different languages, he pointed also to the so-called democratic freedom of the official Muslim clergies who can now be elected to the Soviet parliament. But what seems to be contradictory to the democratic process is that again and again the official media has attacked the formation of the Islamic Revival Party.

The latest criticism came from Pravda Vostoka (February 1, 91) suggesting that Muslims should neither form a party nor can they belong to any political organization for it is against Islam. The Muslims are advised to be content with what is being provided by the government. Without any linkage, the daily blames the Muslim Brotherhood party for creating tension in the Muslim World and paints an image of the Islamic Party intent on establishing a theocratic regime in USSR.

The Islamic Party is seen as a threat to the new Soviet law of religion and the official religious leaders are equally raising their voice against it. Mufti Sadiq Mohammed Yusupov, Chairman of the Religious Board of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, has dismissed the party as illogical and absurd. Islam itself, according to him, is a party and the Holy Qur'an as its constitution.

ISLAM IN NETHERLANDS

Amsterdam: The Netherlands is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, with an estimated 14.6 million inhabitants in an area slightly larger than Massachusetts and Connecticut combined. The vast majority - 97% are ethnic Dutch and Christian. The Muslim community is estimated to number about 400,000 people, most of them originally "guest workers" from Turkey and Morocco. Smaller numbers came from Indonesia and Suriname, countries with former colonial connections to Holland, and from Pakistan. There are also those who have newly embraced Islam - mostly Dutch women who have married Muslims - as well as the so-called "second generation": Dutch-born children of the Muslim immigrants.

INTERNATIONAL HALAL FOOD CONFERENCE

Singapore: The World's first ever Muslim food and technology ex-

hibition will be held in August. The show named as International Muslim Food Exhibition (IMFEX), is being organized by the Singapore-Malay Chamber of Commerce.

Hajji Abdul Kadir Hajji Elias Ali, Vice President of the Chamber said the exhibition would raise awareness about the business potential for trade in Halal (lawful) food products, the only kind of food Muslims can consume. He pointed out that nearly one billion Muslims in the world consumed an estimated \$60 billion worth of Halal food last year. Singapore's export of the Halal food products to the Middle East increased by 30% in 1988 to \$124 million.

Halal food products have been a major area of concern for the International community of Muslims. Western food companies have been hitherto exporting food prepared out of several religiously prohibited ingredients to the Muslim nations. However, most Muslim countries now insist on proper slaughter of the animals for meat purpose and avoidance of lard, gelatin, and similar derivatives from their food products.

And Here in the US...

ISLAM - THE MOST POPULAR RELIGION AMONG BLACK AMERICANS

New York: The New York Times quoting the head of the Mosques Council in USA reports that Islam has become the most popular religion among Black Americans.

Six million of them, most of Asian and African origins have accepted Islam. At least a million Black Americans have become Muslims. It is the fastest growing religion in the U.S. The Black Muslims are mostly from cities like New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit and Ohio. The Muslims have established several Islamic Centers and over 500 mosques all over the U.S. Black Muslims have been very active in propagating the Islamic Dahwah (open invitation.) In New York State alone there are 112 mosques today compared to three back in 1953. Islam is flourishing in the US which is an encouraging phenomenon.

MUSLIM PRAYER IN OPENING HOUSE SESSION IN U.S.

New York: On June 25th, Siraj Wahaj, the Imam of Masjid al-Taqwa, in Brooklyn, New York, offered the daily prayer at the House of Representatives on the Capitol Hill yesterday. Imam Wahaj prayed and called upon The Almighty God to guide the U.S. leaders...and grant them righteousness and wisdom.

WHAT IS MUSLIM AID?

Muslim Aid is a Charity Relief Agency founded in 1985 and is supported by 18 trustees, representing the major Muslim Organizations in the United Kingdom. Since its commencement Brother Yusuf Islam (Cat Stevens) has acted as the Chairman.

The aim of this organization is to seek God's pleasure by raising funds through Zakat, Sadaqah and other donations, in order to help the needy Muslims in many parts of the World. The organization responds to emergencies caused by natural disasters such as floods and droughts, by distributing food, medicine, clothing, drinking water and providing shelter directly to the people in need. The organization is also active in providing assistance to many refugees of war, especially widows, orphans and the elderly.

The overseas activity reflects the organizations policy of avoiding the governments in the distribution of funds and ensuring that the funds are utilized properly and distributed according to the donors' wishes.

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MIRACLES OF THE QUR'AN



A miracle is a divine act which defies and transcends universal norms and laws, which God grants to His messengers and apostles in order to convince people of the truth of their message. Knowing that His messengers would inevitably be challenged to perform such miracles, God bestowed upon them this power.

Thus was Abraham (AS) able to withstand burning by the fire; Jesus (AS) restored sight to the blind and raised the dead; and Moses (AS) parted the Red Sea. The Holy Quran is the living miracle bestowed by God upon the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and it was revealed to him through the Holy Spirit (Gabriel).

Today, approximately 1412 years have passed, and nobody has been able to change a single letter or produce its imitation as it is said in the Quran (See Sura Higr, 15:9), and the statement of the Prophet (pbuh):

“Before me, every prophet was given a miracle and they practiced it during their lifetime: i.e., Jesus used to cure the sick and make the dead alive, etc., Moses was given the stick, etc., and I have been given the permanent miracle of the Quran till The Hour is established, so I hope that my followers will be more in number than all the other apostles’ as my miracle will last till the Day of Resurrection, and it is a Glorious Book; when anyone reads it, even if he is a pagan, etc., he is convinced that it was not written by any human being or any created thing (angels, etc.,) but it is from the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth.” (Bukhari)

Actually the scholars who allege that Muhammad (pbuh) was the author of the Quran claim something which is humanly impossible. Could any person of the sixth century C.E. utter such scientific truths as the Quran contains? Could he describe the evolution of the embryo inside the uterus so accurately as we find it in modern science?

Secondly, is it logical to believe that Muhammad (pbuh), who up to the age of forty was marked only for his honesty and integrity, began all of a sudden the authorship of a book matchless in literary merit and the equivalent of which the whole legion of the Arab poets and orators of highest caliber could not produce?

And lastly, is it justified to say that Muhammad (pbuh) who was known as Al-Ameen (The trustworthy) in his society and who is still admired by the non-Muslim scholars for his honesty and integrity, came forth with a false claim and on that falsehood could train thousands of men of character, integrity, and honesty, who

were able to establish the best human society on the surface of the earth? Surely, any sincere and unbiased searcher of truth will come to believe that the Quran is the revealed Book of God.

The exact object of each Messenger’s miracle was a challenge to the particular traits of each of the groups of people to whom they were sent. A miracle would be futile if it did not achieve its desired effect on its witnesses. For it to have full impact, it should relate to an area of knowledge in which its intended audience is well versed.

For example, if the people for whom a Messenger has been sent excel in medicine, the miracle should also concern these fields. Only in this way can a miracle fulfill its purpose. This rule has been observed in all the divine miracles performed by the Messengers and Prophets of God.

Divine miracles are also designed to provide people with the capacity to perceive them as signs of His power over all things in the Universe. This was shown by the miracles in which God protected Abraham from the burning fire, and caused Moses the infant to be rescued from drowning in the Nile.

In both these miracles, the laws of nature were suspended, through the will of God. Abraham’s miracle was designed to challenge the idolaters who by burning him alive sought revenge against him after he had insulted their idols.

But one might ask, why would God leave His servant Abraham to go through this horrifying experience? Had God helped Abraham to escape this, the idolaters would have had reason to continue believing in the superiority of their idols, over the power of God.

Also, they would have persisted in believing that Abraham was incapable of escaping their idols wrath. Abraham’s ordeal by fire was necessary to demonstrate to the idolaters the falsity of their idols. Any heavenly assistance to Abraham before actually being forced into the fire would have deprived the miracle of its full impact.

The idolaters would have then been able to attribute their idols’ inability to destroy Abraham, to such an intervention. Thus, when Abraham was hurled into the fire, God caused its nature to burn to be suspended, enabling Abraham to stand within the flames unharmed as a challenge to the idolaters.

The purpose behind this miracle was not to save Abraham from his fate, because if this had been God’s wish, He would not have enabled the idolaters to capture him. He actually wanted them to watch Abraham standing in the burning fire unharmed, in defiance of their idols.

This proved that the idols were incapable of inflicting harm on the apostle who had insulted them. Only in this way could the idolaters be convinced of the falsehood of their idols and of the truth of Abraham’s God. Of this miracle God says in the Quran:

“We said: O fire, be coolness and peace for Abraham.” (Surah Al-Anbiya’ 21:69)

There is a great similarity between Abraham’s miracle and that of the rescue of Moses from the Nile. In this miracle, Moses’ mother was inspired by God to abandon him on the river so that he would be spared certain death by the Pharaoh.

To abandon a helpless infant to a turbulent river prey to all its hazards was the last thing a mother could possibly ever do. She could have chosen to hide the child or flee with him out of Egypt. Instead Moses’ mother was inspired to choose this option despite the obvious hazards.

To be continued in our next issue



The Muslim World celebrated its New Year on the first of Moharram 1412, which happened to fall on July 12, 1991. More importantly, however, it is a time to give thanks to God for blessing us with our health and our families. It is also extremely important at this time to realize that since a year from our lives has just passed, we are a step closer to our graves. We must prepare ourselves for the hereafter.

In 622 A.D. the Prophet was ordered by God to migrate to Yathrib, a city north of Makkah. He followed the Divine Command and left his followers for that city which is henceforth was known as 'The City of the Prophet' (Madinat al-nabi) or simply Madinah. This event was so momentous that the Islamic calendar begins with this migration (hijrah).

The literal meaning of Moharram is sacred, prohibited, and unlawful. The month is considered among the four sacred months in the Holy Quran. The Quran states in Surah Al-Tawbah (Repentance) about the 4 sacred months, the following:

"The number of months in the sight of God is twelve (in a year) - So ordained by Him the day He created the heavens and the earth; of them four are sacred: that is the straight usage. So wrong not yourselves therein..." (Quran 9:36)

The four months referred in this Ayah were explained by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) to be: Zul-Qi'dah, Zul-Hijjah, Moharram, and Rajab. During these sacred months Muslims are to observe their sacredness. The Quran demanded that Muslims are not to start the fight, not to kill animals, not to hunt birds, and not to get involved in trivial things.

The Editors, along with the Directors of the Islamic Center of San Francisco, wish you a happy and prosperous year.



Q: 1. Does eating or drinking nullify one's Wudhu (Ablution)?

Q: 2. Is it OK to turn one's face around during Salah (Prayer)?

Q: 3. If you were performing prayer (Salah) and saw that your younger brother is about to touch a hot steaming iron, what should you do?

Q: 4. Mention the names of some of the Sahabah (Prophet's companions) who traveled with him on his first migration.

a) Uthman ibn Affan b) Az-Zubair ibn Al-Awwan
c) Mus'ab ibn Umair

Q: 5. Mention some of the names of the Holy Prophet's children.

A: No, eating or drinking does not nullify one's Wudhu.

A: No, it is not OK to turn one's face around during Salah.

A: Leave Salah, move the younger brother away from danger, and then complete the Salah (Prayer).

A: These are a few of the Sahabahs (The Prophet's companions) who traveled with the Holy Prophet on the first migration:

A: These are the names of few of the Holy Prophet's children:

a) Al-Qassem d) Rukayah g) Fatimah

b) At-Tayyeb e) Zainab

c) At-Taher f) Um Kolthoum



BIRYANI

(Servings for 10 - 12 people)

Ingredients:

- 2 lb mutton or chicken (pieces)
- 1/2 lb almonds
- 25 green chilies
- 1/4 lb cashews
- 2 tbsp coriander seeds
- 1/2 cup shredded coconut
- 1 pc. of turmeric
- 10 big sliced onions
- 12 cloves
- 1 lb butter
- 6 bits of cinnamon
- 2 lb rice
- 1 pc of ginger
- 8 cups of water
- 6 pads of cardamom
- coriander leaves
- little tapioca
- salt to taste

Preparation:

1. Stew meat for 20 minutes to soften.
2. Grind together chilies, coriander seeds and turmeric; set aside.
3. Separately grind cloves, cinnamon, ginger and cardamom. Also, grind and keep separate coconut, almond, cashews and tapioca.
4. Fry onions in butter and add to it the first two grindings.
5. Add on-half onions, salt and a handful of coriander leaves to the meat.
6. Fry rice in the remaining butter for 10 minutes - add water, and stir well.
7. Add the meat, remaining onions and the third grinding.
8. Cover with clean cloth and kettle lid.
9. Cook over low heat.
10. Add more hot water if rice is not done in 20 minutes.

If the rice is done, then the Biryani is ready to be served.



THE STORY OF UMME HAKIM (R.A.)

Umme Hakim (R.A.) was the wife of Akrimah-bin-Abi-Jahl. She participated in the battle of Uhud on the enemy side. She embraced Islam on the fall of Mecca. She loved her husband very much, who would not embrace Islam, on account that his father despised Islam.

After the fall of Mecca, her husband fled to Yemen. Umme Hakim (R.A.) secured a pardon for him from the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and joined her husband in Yemen and induced him to return back home. She told him, "You can be safe from the sword of Mohammad (pbuh) only when you put yourself in his lap."

She returned with him to Madinah, where Akrimah embraced Islam and the couple began to live together happily.

They both participated in the Syrian war during the Caliphate of Abu Bakr (RAA). During another battle, Akrimah was killed. Umme Hakim (R.A.) was remarried to another Mujahid, Khalid-bin-Said (RAA). It was at a place called Marja-us-Safr that her husband wanted to meet her.

She said: "We have enemy concentrating on all fronts. We shall meet after they are done away with."

Khalid-bin-Said (RAA) said: "I am not sure if I will survive this battle."

They then shared the bed for the first time in a tent at that place. Next day, Khalid-bin-Said (RAA) was arranging for the Walimah when the enemy attacked with full force and he was killed in the battle.

Umme Hakim (RAA) packed up her tent and other luggage, and with a tent-peg in her hand, jumped in the battle and fought ferociously with the enemy till she had killed seven of them. In times of war, not to speak of woman, but even no man would like to get married under such circumstances.

Speaking of courage and valor, instead of mourning the loss of her husband on the day of his death, she rushed into the battlefield and killed seven of the enemy soldiers single handed. What could be a better proof of the strength of Imaan (faith) in the women of those times?



ARCHITECTURE

Like every other Islamic discipline, architecture and its development was very much influenced and directed by the Holy Qur'an and its philosophy of life.

The spirit of Islamic faith was the unifying factor which kept together different designs of building and molded them into a style representing the spirit of Unity in multiplicity - a unique characteristic of the Islamic architecture. It also reflects the remarkable sense of harmony and equilibrium between the different, and even the opposite elements.

This is because the keynote of the Islamic sciences, including architecture, is the interdependence and interrelation of all things in the Universe. There is complete equilibrium in Islamic architectural designing, as well as in city planning, between the natural environment and the natural forces and elements, like water, air and light, which are essential to human life.

In planning their buildings for residence, worship or business and the streets within the town area and for other basic necessities of the city life, Muslim architects made the maximum use of the natural factors available in the area. In hot areas, narrow streets were built to preserve the cool air of the night during the hot hours of the day.

When the temperatures were very high, wind towers were built to ventilate residential buildings and low basements were used during summer for spending the hot hours of noon and also for cisterns to keep the water cool.

The Holy Qur'an presents the ideal architectural style which offers the maximum comforts, joy and beauty to the residents and is in complete equilibrium with the natural environment, making the maximum use of the natural factors with the least possible waste.

It is described in very simple words in Surah Al-Imran, **"But those who fear their Lord, for them are gardens underneath**

which rivers flow, wherein they are to dwell forever. A gift of welcome from their Lord." (Qur'an 3:198)

And in Surah Al-Tawbah, we read, **"Gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide, and beautiful mansions in gardens of everlasting bliss."** (Qur'an 9:72)

And in Surah Al-Sajdah is this revelation, **"For those who believe and do righteous good deeds, for them are gardens (Paradise) as an entertainment, for what they used to do."** (Qur'an 32:19)

In other words, their normal residence will be in gardens with all the usual facilities, comforts and peace of home but with the added pleasure and joy of a natural environment.

The Qur'an further mentions some of the additional facilities of these residential gardens in these words, **"We shall soon admit (them) to gardens, with rivers flowing beneath, - their eternal home; and We shall admit them to shades, cool and ever deepening."** (Qur'an 4:57)

And in Surah Al-Ra'd, we read, **"A similitude of the garden which is promised to the righteous! Beneath it rivers flow; everlasting is the enjoyment thereof and its shade (cool and temperate)."** (Qur'an 13:35)

This quality of their blissful residence is clearly described in this verse, **"Reclining therein upon the couches, they will find there neither (heat of) a Sun nor (the Moon's) bitter cold. The shade of the (garden trees) is close upon them and the clustered fruits thereof hang low."** (Qur'an 76:13-14)

And in Surah Al-Mursalat, we read, **"As to the righteous, they shall be amidst (cool) shades and springs (of water). And they shall have fruits such as they desire."** (Qur'an 77:41-42)

These descriptions of ideal buildings amidst a natural environment stimulated architectural styles in the early Islamic Era and produced architectural wonders such as the Alhambra of Granada, the beautiful and massive mosques of Cordoba and Seville, Medinat al-Zehra near Cordoba, the Dome of the Rock of Jerusalem, the mosques of Istanbul, the Ibn Tulun Mosque of Cairo and the Taj Mahal of Agra.

Innumerable mosques, palaces and castles in Spain, North Africa, India, Turkistan, Iran and other Muslim countries bear evidence of the grandeur and majesty of the architectural styles and modes which sprang from the Qur'anic studies. The massive structural beauty and simplicity of these buildings, especially of mosques remind one of the Majesty and Greatness of The Creator.

Among many other aspects of the Islamic architecture, its identification with the environment is predominant.

It is the influence of the Qur'an and the Islamic faith that a Muslim has always felt that his life on this Earth is that of a traveler on a journey and that his permanent home is elsewhere. He has therefore tried to live in peace and harmony with his environment with the least disturbance of the latter, and his architectural designs and town planning fully reflect this philosophy of life.

Sayyed H Nasr in his article on Islamic Science states, "He has thus lived in equilibrium with his environment because he has submitted himself to the universal laws which dominate all levels of existence and which are the metaphysical source of the laws governing the natural world. He has lived in peace and harmony with The Almighty and His Laws and therefore with the natural environment which reflects on its own level the harmony and the equilibrium of the universal order."

ON GOOD MANNERS

Cleanliness - Were it not for fear of troubling my disciples, verily I would order them to clean their teeth before every prayer. The Almighty is Pure and loves purity and cleanliness.

Compassion - There is the reward of Paradise for a Muslim who suffers with patience when the soul of his affectionate friend is taken away.

Contentment - When you see a person who has been given more than you in money and beauty, then look at those who have been given less. Look at those inferior to yourselves, it is best for you, so that you may not hold The Almighty's benefits in contempt.

Courtesy - No father has given his child anything better than good manners. Respect people according to their eminence.

Envy - If envy were justifiable, two people would be the proper objects for it; one, a man whom The Almighty has given riches, and command him to bestow in charity; the other, one to whom The Almighty has granted the knowledge of religion, and who acts thereon himself and imparts instruction to others. Keep yourselves far from envy; because it eats up and takes away good actions as fire eats up and burns wood.

Gentleness - Verily, The Almighty is mild, and is fond of mildness, and gives to the mild what He does not to the harsh. The Almighty is gentle and loves gentleness.

Hospitality - It is not right for a guest to stay as long as to cause inconvenience to the host.

Humility - The servants of The Almighty are they who walk on Earth in humbleness. Humility and courtesy are acts of piety. Whoever is humble to men for the Almighty's sake, may The Almighty exalt his eminence.

Kindness - He from whom the greatest good comes to The Almighty's creatures is the most favored of The Almighty. Whoever is kind to The Almighty's creatures, God is kind to him; therefore be kind to the man on Earth, whether good or bad, since being kind to the bad is to withhold them from evil. Kindness is a mark of faith; and whosoever has no kindness has no faith.

Modesty - True modesty is the source of all virtues.

Peace - Shall I not inform you of better acts than fasting, giving alms and performing prayers? Make peace between one another, enmity and malice tear up rewards by the roots.

Pride - Poverty is my pride. The haughty will not enter Paradise, nor a violent speaker.

Purity - "There is a polish for everything, that takes away rust; and the polish for the heart is the remembrance of The Almighty," said the Holy Prophet. Someone asked the Holy Prophet: "Teach me a work such that when I perform it both The Almighty and the man will love me." The Prophet replied: "Desire not the world and The Almighty will love you, and desire not what other men have and they will love you."

Reason - The Almighty has not created anything better than Reason, or anything more perfect or more beautiful than Reason; the benefits which The Almighty bestows are on its account; and understanding is by it, and The Almighty's wrath is caused by it, and by it are the rewards and punishments.

By Dr. Shawki Futaki

In 1975, Dr. Shawki Futaki, a 67 years old Japanese Director of one of the major hospitals in Tokyo, the capital of Japan, embraced Islam. Before embracing Islam, Dr. Futaki was a follower of Shintoism, the religion of the majority in Japan. Presently, Dr. Futaki now presides over the Islamic Center in Tokyo.

This 67 year old practicing physician and journalist is full of enthusiasm and vigor. He used to be the editor of a widely circulated magazine called 'Sekai Jeep'. In 1971, after a long-drawn medical practice trial Dr. Futaki was found guilty. His medical license was suspended and imprisoned for three years. In prison, he spent time reading books on philosophy, politics and religion.

Describing his feelings while he was in jail, "Whenever I sat alone all by myself I felt that the idea of the unity of creation would come to my mind. I used to think of the Universe and its Creator. Then gradually I started to believe in the Oneness of God. As my term ended, I discussed in depth with one of my close Japanese Muslim friend named Abu Bakr Morimoto, the ex-president of the Japan Islamic Association. Abu Bakr Morimoto used to come to me every time he launched a contribution campaign to support the Islamic movement in Japan, and I would always participate with conviction in such campaigns. Once Abu Bakr said: Your deeds are exactly those of a good Muslim, why don't you embrace Islam? I just smiled at him."

One day Mr. Morimoto said: "...the problem of the weakened people would be automatically solved if only the religion of Islam should spread on the Earth. For Islam is the religion of love and brotherhood." On hearing this, Dr. Futaki stood up and said that he has decided to embrace Islam with another friend. They immediately went to the Islamic Center in Tokyo and declared the Shahadah (reciting of the kalimah - There is no God but one God and Mohammed is the Messenger of God.)

After Dr. Futaki's release from prison, he was rehabilitated in the medical profession. His clinic is open seven days a week and he does not charge except within the insurance coverage. He established the Nippon Islam Kyodan.

Dr. Futaki is happy that in Islam there is no priesthood as such. And he rightly understands that it is incumbent upon every Muslim to propagate and preach Islam as far as their abilities permit. The membership of his Islamic Society now runs into tens of thousands.

Many observers think that his conversion to Islam marks an important turning point in the history of Islam in Japan. Recently, he led a big delegation from Japan to perform the Hajj (pilgrimage) last year. May The Almighty bless him with more vigor and enthusiasm to dedicate himself in The Almighty's Path.

THE TWELVE MONTHS IN AN ISLAMIC CALENDAR YEAR

THE HIJRI CALENDAR

The Muslim Era began with the Great Event of the Hijrah from Mecca to Medina or the Emigration of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) and his companions from Mecca to Medina.

The adoption of this event as the beginning of the Muslim Era took place in the Caliphate of Omar Ibn Al-Khattab (RAA), the second Caliph after Muhammad (S.A.W.). We are now in the year 1412 after Hijrah (1412 A.H.).

The Muslim calendar is Lunar, and its months are determined by the various positions of the moon. In every year there are twelve months, and each month is either 29 or 30 days depending on the position of the moon.

These months are:

Moharram

Rajab

Safar

Sha'ban

Rabi' al-Awwal

Ramadan

Rabi' al-Thani

Shawwal

Jumada al-Oola

Zul-Qi'dah

Jumada al-Thaniyah

Zul-Hijjah

MAJOR MUSLIM ACHIEVEMENTS IN SCIENCE



Muslims translated most of the scientific works of antiquity into Arabic.

Muslim mathematicians devised and developed Algebra.

Al-Khwarazmi used Arabic numerals which came to the West through his work in the 9th century.

Al-Razi described and treated smallpox in the 10th century.

Al-Razi also used alcohol as an antiseptic.

Ibn Sina diagnosed and treated meningitis in the 11th century.

Ibn al-Haytham discovered the Camera Obscura in the 11th century.

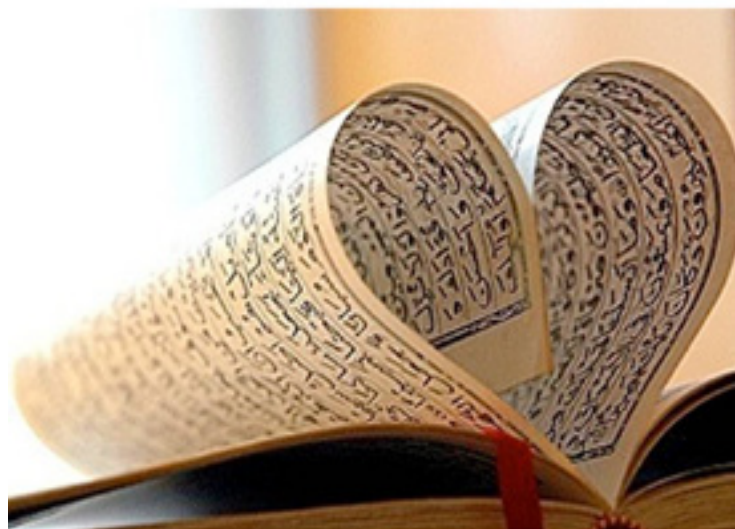
Al-Biruni described the Ganges valley as a sedimentary basin in the 11th century.

Muslims built the first observatory as a scientific institution in the 13th century.

Qutb al-Din al-Shirazi explained the cause of the rainbow in the 13th century.

Ibn al-Nafis described the minor circulation of the blood in the 14th century.

Al-Kashani invented a computing machine in the 15th century.



Some English words derived from the Arabic words.

Admiral	-	amir al-rahl
Jasmine	-	yasín
Lemon	-	limun
Alchemy	-	al-kimiya'
Lute	-	al-'ud
Alcove	-	al-qubba
Mask	-	maskhara
Algebra	-	al-jabr
Monsoon	-	mawsim
Amber	-	anbar
Musk	-	musk
Nadir	-	nazir
Orange	-	naranj
Artichoke	-	al-kharshuf
Rice	-	ruzz
Atlas	-	atlas
Saffron	-	za'faran
Sandalwood	-	sandal
Sofa	-	suffa
Camel	-	jamal
Sugar	-	sukhar
Syrup	-	sharab, shurb
Cotton	-	qutun
Troubadour	-	tarrab
Giraffe	-	zurafa
Zero	-	sifr

Prophet Salih (PBUH) was sent as a Prophet to the tribe of Bani Thamud to rectify their depraved people. The Thamudites were the descendants of Thamud, a grandson of Sam. They lived in Wadi al-Qura and Al-Hajr between Syria and Hijaz. They were idol worshipers and their tribe flourished for more than two centuries after 'Ad. Its people were renowned for their longevity and enormous well-built bodies. They built spacious buildings in the caves of the mountains and attained considerable powers.

Slaughtering of the She-Camel

The Prophet Salih (PBUH) was commissioned by God to invite the tribe to the worship of One God but the tribe turned a deaf ear to the Prophet's preaching. Finally, the tribe decided to kill the Prophet. The Almighty fixed a she-camel as a sign and warned them if they slew her, they would be overtaken by the chastisement from God. Prophet Salih (PBUH) asked the tribe to be kind to the she-camel and let her graze in the pastures and drink water from the spring but the tribesmen denied the access, instead they slaughtered the she-camel.

Chastisement Befalls

After the slaughtering of the she-camel the tribesmen decided to carry out their final plan against Prophet Salih (PBUH). Before they could proceed, a visitation befell them and they were exterminated by the showering of stones from the volcanic eruption.

Description in the Holy Qur'an

Some references regarding the Prophet Salih (PBUH) and his people are as follows:

"And to the Thamud We sent their brother Salih. He said: O my people: Serve The Almighty. You have no God other than Him. Clear proof, indeed, has come to you from your Lord. This is The Almighty's she-camel for you, a sign. Therefore, leave her alone to pasture on the Almighty's Earth and do not do her any harm. Otherwise painful chastisement will overtake you. And remember when He has made you the successors after 'Ad and settled you in the land. You made mansions on its plains and hew out houses in the mountains: remember, therefore, The Almighty's benefits and do not act corruptly in the land making any mischief. The Chiefs of those who behaved proudly among his people said to those who were considered weak, to those who believed from among them. Are you sure that Salih is sent by his Lord? They said: Surely we are the believers in what he has been sent with. Those who were haughty said: Surely we deny of what you believe in. So they slew the she-camel and revolted against their Lord's Commandments and they said: O Salih! Bring us of what you have threatened us with if you are one of the Apostles. Then the earthquake overtook them so they became motionless bodies in their abodes." (Qur'an 7:73-78)



THE VALOR AND HEROISM OF MUSAB-BIN-UMAIR (RAA)

Musab-bin-Umair (RAA) had been brought up in great love and affection by his well-to-do parents. Before embracing Islam, he lived in luxury and comfort.

It is said that he was the most well-dressed youth of Mecca. He embraced Islam in its early days, without his parents' knowledge. However, when they came to know of it, they got very upset and restricted him from going out.

At the first opportunity, Musab-bin-Umair (RAA) escaped and emigrated to Abyssinia and then to Madinah. An individual brought up in comfort and luxury was now living a life of abstinence and austerity.

In the battle of Uhud, Musab-bin-Umair (RAA) held the flag of Islam. When the Muslims on meeting defeat were dispersing in confusion, Musab-bin-Umair (RAA) held the flag and stood at his post like a rock.

An enemy soldier came and cut off his hand with a sword, so that the flag might fall down and proclaim defeat for the Muslims. Musab-bin-Umair (RAA) at once grabbed the flag in the other hand. The enemy soldier then slashed the other hand.

Musab-bin-Umair (RAA) still stood clinging the flag to his bosom with the help of his bleeding arms. Lastly, an enemy arrow pierced through him, and Musab-bin-Umair (RAA) fell dead on the battlefield. But as long as he was alive, he did not let the flag go down. Immediately, another Muslim ran and took over the flag.

At the time of his burial, Musab-bin-Umair (RAA) had only one sheet to cover his body. This sheet was too short for his size. When it was drawn to cover his head, the feet remained exposed and vice versa.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) said: "Cover his head with the sheet, and his feet with the Azkhar' leaves." Such was the end of a youth who was brought up in luxury and comfort.

Once an individual develops faith, it makes the individual forget everything else, whether be it wealth, luxury or life itself. Musab-bin-Umair (RAA), a true hero and one of the great martyrs.

ISLAMIC DIETARY LAWS

Islam is a religion in which there are few dietary rules. In Islam, one can eat all that is pure and nutritious, but it also prohibits certain categories of food and drink.

Among the categories of food and drink forbidden according to Quranic injunctions are the following:

Meat of dead animals (carrion).

Meat of strangled animals.

Meat of dead animals through beating.

Meat of dead animals through falling from a height.

Meat of dead animals killed by (the goring of) a horn.

Meat of dead animals devoured of wild beasts.

Food on which any other name has been invoked besides that of God.

Meat of animals that have been immolated into idols.

Meat of swine (pig), including anything prepared from swine.

All intoxicants including all types of alcohol and intoxicating drugs.

In Surah Al-Ma'idah, the forbidden foods are explained in detail:

"Forbidden to you (for food) are: dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which hath been invoked the name of other than God, and that which hath been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by being gored to death; that which hath been (partly) eaten by a wild animal; unless ye are able to slaughter it (in due form); that which is sacrificed on stone (altars); (Forbidden) also is the division (of meat) by raffling with arrows: that is impiety." (Qur'an 5:4)

"O you who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows are an abomination-of Satan's handiwork; Eschew such (abomination) that you may prosper. Satan's plan is (but) to excite enmity and hatred between you, with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of God and from Prayer. Will you not then abstain?" (Qur'an 5:90-91)

Since the above categories are obviously too many to explain in one issue, we will be explaining the categories in future issues.